

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

P. N. E. U. Office,
28, Victoria Street.

DEAR EDITOR,

The second P. N. E. U. Conference has come and gone, but I trust that it has not already slipped so far back into the "limbo of forgotten vanities," but that a few words about the proceedings may be welcomed by the students who were not able to be present.

Of the success of the Conference there can be no question. If the members of the committee had cause for encouragement and rejoicing last year, the result of their efforts *this* year certainly surpassed even their most sanguine expectations. The meetings were well attended, and the amount of interest, sympathy, and enthusiasm expressed, collectively and individually, gave abundant evidence of the real hold that the P. N. E. U. has in the hearts of its members.

It has been very truly said that a society only exists in so far as it meets a want. The P. N. E. U. does more than exist—it lives, and the need that it endeavours to meet among thoughtful parents and teachers must be a very real one indeed, if the life of the Society increases in proportion to the necessity for its existence. It is, I suppose, the old question of supply and demand. The demand creates the supply.

The very fact that so many busy parents and teachers could find time, in the month of May, to attend meetings, lasting several hours each day, speaks for itself. But over and above this evidence of interest was the unsolicited testimony from many who were present of good work going on in all directions, and many were the expressions of gratitude for real and definite help received.

But to the students from Ambleside the Conference must have appealed in quite a particular and exclusive sense. Those who were present must have felt that everything had for them a peculiar meaning. The students are, as it were, "the initiated." *They*, by virtue of their training and heritage, have to carry out in practical everyday life the principles and teaching of the P.N.E.U., *they* have to solve day by day problems that make such a Conference a necessity. I think I am not putting matters too forcibly when I say that it is upon the students mainly that the future of the P.N.E.U. depends. They have to carry forward its principles, its methods, and, above all, its enthusiasms into the region of practical realities. To the students, therefore, the Conference must have had much to say, and have given much food for thought and reflection.

The speeches, papers, and discussions all will be able to read in full when issued in the "Parents' Review" (July and August), but these

must, I know, seem cold and dull without the enthusiasm and life of the moment that inspired them. What I wish I could convey to you in words is that sense of *oneness* and good-fellowship which pervaded the meetings, that instinctive sympathy which springs up between numbers acting together for a common end. Above all, I wish I could bring home to you the conviction, which seems to be rather in the nature of a revelation, that the Union possesses within itself a tremendous power of growth, a power to grow deeper *inwards* and wider *outwards*, a power which, whether working inwardly or outwardly, is bound to make itself felt. One of the greatest difficulties, I imagine, of the students who are at work must be the feeling that they are striving single-handed, that they are lonely swimmers who may one day get sucked under by the current. Many never, or very rarely, come in contact with the P.N.E.U. branches and workers, and the Union as a whole may seem rather a vague affair. To any who feel like this the Conference gives "the lie direct." The Union is a corporate organised whole, doing good and useful work, possessing a vital impelling force and a far-reaching influence. The students are members of this body, and on them especially is laid the burden of keeping alive this force and extending this influence.

I have but very inadequately expressed what I wanted to say, and in venturing to write this letter I have felt that those who would read it probably knew a good deal more of the matter than I did. I have not been trained at Ambleside!

I am, dear Editor,

Yours sincerely,

FRANCES BLOGG.

Scale How,

27th May, 1898.

DEAR EDITOR,

With a humble self distrust we begin the Students' letter to the *Magazine* for this half-year. We have been requested *not* to tell you merely "that Mrs. Dallas Yorke has been, and that the students have been to Coniston." This time we cannot truthfully tell you one of these items of news, as Mrs. Dallas Yorke does not pay us her customary visit on Trinity Sunday this year. She is abroad and not very strong, but we hope she will be able to come some Sunday in July.

Other visits we have not had in profusion this year, as Miss Mason has not been equal to much entertaining. We are glad to say that now she is among us again, going about with all her accustomed vigour. It seemed quite a different atmosphere in the house while she was ill so long, and it was sad that the juniors should connect her with a sofa.

Miss Kitching has had two of her sisters here so that we "babes" have made the acquaintance of another old student whom perhaps some

of you remember. Miss Winnie Kitching had a talk with us about the Association, chiefly for the benefit of the juniors, who did not realise to what worthy institution they belonged! Since then we have had Miss Fagan, who has awakened in us afresh the enthusiasm for the Association which she created last year.

Mrs. Franklin has also been, on which occasion the house was full of the usual excitement of mystery and secrets, hopes rising and falling with every fresh criticism lesson or interview.

We suppose most of you know of Miss Marian Flower's engagement? We take this opportunity to offer her our hearty congratulations. Mr. Underhill ran down for a day, looking for some one to fill her place—a task which must be difficult.

I think even a casual observer would notice the change wrought in the house by our dear Vice-Principal, Miss Williams. We all wonder however we managed without her, and her lectures vie with Miss Mason's in our affections; "Quick" is now a different book, and we appreciate "Parents and Children" more and more under her able interpretation. The Practising School has had an influx of fresh life; we have 4 "wees" now, Sylva and Madge in Ib, and Dora and Gertrude (Sylva's little sister) in Ia. Dora is really turning out something of a success. She remembers her French, and is so keen at nature work.

In the third class we have still Gracie and Georgie, but we have also Winnie Tibbets, quite a P. N. E. U. child, and another girl, a boarder, who is delightful to teach. Kathleen Flower and Eldwyth left us at Christmas, and we have in the fourth class Nellie Clindimmon, sister to the one in Class III.; and Hilda Thomas, the latest boarder, of whom we are all very fond. These four board with Miss Leighton, who gives them an excellent character.

We have a new Institution now; the fourth class mistress goes down with the children to tea, and stays the evening with them, and takes them out on half-holidays, and spends Sunday with them, etc. It is a piece of valuable experience for us and a pleasant change.

We are all, of course, as keen as ever on our Natural History investigations; a family of tadpoles, reared from the spawn, disport themselves in a jam pot on the classroom window ledge. One of our number brought down upon herself various maledictory remarks by dissecting a mole. That, we admit, was interesting; it was quaint to view the organs we learnt about for the National Health, etc., beautifully arranged in miniature, and to find that the bones of the mole's hand so exactly corresponded to ours. But this science devotee carried matters still further. She boiled the carcase upstairs in an afternoon tea kettle *without* deodorants; and the process was painful, extremely painful, to the inhabitants of the top landing. The result of the boiling was the beautiful little bones of the jaw, so fine yet so strong, and the skull, which blew away one windy day to the great grief of its owner. The whole skeleton proved too difficult to be managed by inexperienced hands.

Those who know Scale How will be interested to hear that we are now the proud possessors of some pictures in the class room—"The Great Recognition," in two large photographs, over the mantelpiece; prints

of the heads of the principal poets, framed in sets of six, round the walls; and copies of two pictures, "Sir Galahad" and "Aspiration," by Watts.

The juniors gave us a capital entertainment one Saturday—"Scenes from 'Alice,'" "Tweedledum and Tweedledee," "The Mock Turtle," "The Duchess and the Baby," and that aggravating old man "Sitting on a Gate" and others. They were splendid; the topical allusions brought down the house, and the pepper made the audience sneeze far more than the Baby, whose pillow-like visage retained a bland smile. Alice was charming, and the Mad Tea Party was a most delightful feast of fun. The shell of the Mock Turtle was really a work of art, and the armour of the White Knight, though it looked suspiciously inclined to give way at the knee, shone with quite a silvery sheen. Altogether it was one of the most ambitious and successful entertainments that we have had.

We are afraid we are taking up too much room with our gossip, so conclude by wishing every one a very pleasant summer holiday.

With sincere regards from

THE STUDENTS.

DEAR EDITOR,

Knowing how difficult it often is to make English grammar interesting to young children, I should like to tell others of a plan for teaching the parts of speech, which I have tried with great success.

Eight little boxes are required, if possible, all alike, and we begin with two, labelled "nouns" and "verbs" respectively.

I print words on slips of paper, and let the children put them together to make sentences, *e.g.*, "The dog barks." Then after explanation as to why and when some words are called nouns and other verbs, the children put each printed word into its right box.

This proves an engrossing occupation, and the interest increases with the number of boxes. Of course words should never be given singly, since many may be used as more than one part of speech. As, therefore, only the *use* of a word in a sentence can, as a rule, determine its classification, from the beginning sentences should be made.

It will be, therefore, necessary, occasionally to employ words with which the child is not already familiar, but it is quite easy to pass such over and say "we have not yet learned the name of the box to which this word belongs."

I have noticed, in the case of children it has been my privilege to teach, that nearly every one confuses the *actual* thing with the *name* of the thing mentioned, *e.g.*, the word "cat" is a noun, the name of the animal denoted by that word, but *not* the animal itself.

This appears to me to be a very bad fault, and one I find rather difficult to overcome. Any teacher will soon find ways of varying the exercises with these boxes, and I hope that any who put this suggestion into practice will meet with as good results as I have done.

M. W. KITCHING.

May 13th.

DEAR EDITOR,

I think ex-students might like to know of a magazine, called *Sacred Art*, which came out last winter. Perhaps they already know it, but if not I feel sure all would find it a help in giving Bible lessons to young children. It contains illustrations of Bible stories taken from the works of eminent modern painters. Each number (price 6d.) contains ten pictures, and the whole is to be completed in twelve parts. It is to be had at almost any bookstall, or from Cassell's National Library.

M. C.

DEAR EDITOR,

I wonder how many of our number are acquainted with a delightful book by E. A. Jelf, M.A., entitled, "Eileen's Journey, or History in Fairyland?" An Irish girl—Eileen by name, in company with Titania, the fairy queen, travels back in the magic train into past years, and is taken to various parts of the world, where she beholds scenes recorded in history, but not in the only way we are able to do, by the means of books. Eileen and Titania are invisible, and are witnesses of the events recorded at the moment at which they happened. In the preface the author states that his object throughout the book is to search in the past centuries for whatever is "most beautiful and best Every country, every age, every faith has probably something of the beautiful and good; and we should seek to find it everywhere—even in the most unlikely places." And with this end in view we witness the Relief of Lucknow—the eve of Waterloo—the wanderings of Prince Charlie—the youth of Michael Angelo—the life and death of Jeanne d' Arc—the adventures of Haroun Alraschid—and others more or less familiar. The language is simple and well chosen, and accords well with the author's aim. No one could read the book without having their eyes opened to seek more earnestly than before for good in everything.

It is published by John Murray, Albemarle Street, London, and the price is 10/6.

Yours truly,

LILIAN GRAY.